

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 120363

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TAGS: ETEL, GW, US

SUBJECT: MEETING ON USE OF VOA LW TRANSMITTER AND FREQUENCY

REF: STATE 120352

BONN 16901 OF 12 OCT 1977 REPEATED FYI AS STATED IN REF:

"SUMMARY: US AND FRG MET IN BONN TO DISCUSS THE VOA LONG WAVE 209 FREQUENCY AND TRANSMITTER. THE US OFFERED SEVERAL PROPOSALS BY WHICH THE VOA AND DEUTSCHLANDFUNK WOULD SHARE THE USE OF THE TRANSMITTER AND FREQUENCY. THE GERMANS INITIAL REQUEST WAS FOR FULL FRG USE OF THE TRANSMITTER AND FREQUENCY WITHOUT ANY TIME SHARING. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE DIVERSE PROPOSALS, A SECOND MEETING, POSSIBLY IN MID-JANUARY, WOULD BE REQUIRED. END SUMMARY

1. ON OCTOBER 11 THE US DELEGATION MET IN BONN WITH FRG REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS THE VOA LONG WAVE 209 FREQUENCY AND ERCHING TRANSMITTER. A SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSALS PRE-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 120363

SENT BY BOTH SIDES IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE US PROPOSED A TIME SHARING ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY VOA WOULD USE THE FREQUENCY EIGHT HOURS DURING THE DAY IN THE WINTER. THE DEUTSCHLANDFUNK (DLF) WOULD HAVE FULL USE OF

THE TRANSMITTER AND FREQUENCY THE REST OF THE TIME WITH

THE DLF ASSUMING ALL OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS PLUS ALL CONVERSION COSTS OF THE DIRECTIONAL ANTENNA.

B. IN RESPONSE TO THE GERMAN OBJECTIONS CONCERNING THE TIME SHARING ARRANGEMENT ON GROUNDS OF BREAKING UP PROGRAM PATTERNS, THE US SIDE SUGGESTED THAT IT COULD REDUCE ITS VOA TRANSMISSION FROM THREE BLOCKS OF TIME TO TWO BLOCKS, ELIMINATING THE NOON TIME BROADCASTS.

C. AS A THIRD PROPOSAL THE US SIDE SUGGESTED THAT VOA BE GIVEN THE USE OF THE DEUTSCHE WELLE GERMAN FACILITY AT KIGALI FOR A PERIOD OF PRIME EVENING TIME AND CONTINUE TO HAVE ONE PERIOD OF BROADCASTING IN THE MORNING ON THE MUNICH STATION WITH DLF OPERATING THERE THE REST OF THE TIME.

2. THE FRG REPRESENTATIVES MADE THE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS:

A. BASED ON UNDERSTANDINGS THEY CLAIM WERE MADE BETWEEN THE FRG AND THE US PRIOR TO AND DURING THE 1975 LF/MF CONFERENCE, THE GERMANS SAID THEY EXPECTED THAT THEY WOULD BE GIVEN FULL FREQUENCY AND TRANSMITTER USE OF THE MUNICH FACILITY AND WERE "SURPRISED" THAT THE US PROPOSED A TIME SHARING AGREEMENT. THEY SAID THEY HOPED DLF WOULD BE ALLOWED TO USE THE MUNICH FACILITY 24 HOURS A DAY. THE US SIDE REVIEWED THE HISTORY SURROUNDING THE 1975 LF/MF CONFERENCE.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 120363

ENCE AND EMPHASIZED ITS UNDERSTANDING THAT FREQUENCY 209 WAS REQUESTED AND OBTAINED FOR US USE. THE GERMANS AGREED IT WOULD BE WORTHWHILE TO DISCUSS VARIOUS POSSIBILITIES FOR OPTIMAL USE OF THE FACILITIES.

B. AS A REFINEMENT TO THE ABOVE PROPOSAL, THE GERMANS SUGGESTED THAT DLF USE THE FACILITIES ON A 24 HOUR BASIS UNTIL "SUCH TIME AS VOA WANTED TO USE IT." (AT THIS POINT THE US SIDE EMPHASIZED THAT THE VOA POSITION IS CLAR, NAMELY THAT IT WISHES TO USE THE FACILITIES.)

C. FINALLY THE FRG REPRESENTATIVES SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF A JOINT USE OF THE FACILITY WITH VOA USING IT DURING THE DAY AND DLF USING IT AT NIGHT. THE US SIDE STATED THAT THE COST TO THE US WOULD BE PROHIBITIVE.

3. KRATH OF THE BUNDESPOSTMINISTERIUM NOTED THAT INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING FROM THE FRG HAS ALWAYS HAD POSSIBLE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST-WEST RELATIONS. HE POINTED OUT THAT AN RFE/RL APPLICATION FOR FOUR 250 KW TRANSMITTERS WAS NOW PENDING. HE STATED THAT HE PERSONALLY "WAS NOT CERTAIN" THAT THIS WAS AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO DISCUSS VOA

USE OF FREQUENCY 209.

4. DURING THE DISCUSSIONS THE US SIDE REQUESTED AN EXPLANATION OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF GERMAN BROADCASTING, PARTICULARLY AS IT PERTAINED TO FRG POLICY CONCERNING COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING. THE GERMANS STATED THAT THERE IS NO PRIVATE BROADCASTING IN GERMANY. IN 1961 THE FRG SUPREME COURT DECISION SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT WITH A SCARCITY OF LONG AND MEDIUM WAVE FREQUENCIES AVAILABLE IN GERMANY, IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO OFFER BROADCASTING FACILITIES TO ALL GROUPS WISHING THEM; THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS TO OFFER PUBLIC GROUPS A VOICE IN PUBLIC BROADCASTING. THE SUPREME COURT DECISION MADE IT CLEAR THAT A DIVERSITY OF OPINION

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 120363

WAS REQUIRED WHICH COULD NOT BE OBTAINED BY GIVING THE FEW AVAILABLE FREQUENCIES TO ONLY A FEW PRIVATE BROADCASTERS AND DENYING OTHER GROUPS ACCESS TO THE MEDIA.

5. KRATH STRESSED THAT IN THE CASE OF EUROPA 1, THE GERMANS MADE IT QUITE CLEAR TO THE FRENCH IN GENEVA THAT IF A FREQUENCY WAS ALLOCATED TO THE STATION, WHICH IT WAS, THE TRANSMITTER SHOULD IN TIME BE REMOVED FROM GERMANY TO FRANCE. KRATH EMPHASIZED THAT THE FRG CONSIDERS THE EUROPA 1 TRANSMITTER A RELIC OF THE POST-WAR PERIOD AND CANNOT BE USED AS A MODEL FOR FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS.

6. COMMENT: IT WAS EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE DISCUSSIONS THAT THE MAIN DIFFICULTY THE GERMANS HAD WITH THE US TIME SHARING PROPOSAL WAS IN DEALING WITH CRITICISM FROM THE EAST, ESPECIALLY EAST GERMANY. BOTH DURING THE MEETINGS AND IN SIDE DISCUSSIONS, THE GERMANS EMPHASIZED THAT THEY HAD COME UNDER HEAVY CRITICISM IN INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS FOR ALLOWING THE VOA TO RETAIN A VERY VALUABLE LONG WAVE FREQUENCY. THE GERMANS ASSERT THAT EAST EUROPE HAS ALREADY RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER IT IS NECESSARY FOR WEST GERMANY TO HAVE TWO LONG WAVE FREQUENCIES IF ONE WAS TO BE USED BY ANOTHER COUNTRY.

7. KRATH ALSO NOTED IN AN INFORMAL SIDE DISCUSSION THAT IT WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR THE FRG TO CONTEMPLATE A SHARING ARRANGEMENT BECAUSE OF THE PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF DLF. HE EXPLAINED THAT DLF WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1961, IS A CREATURE OF THE BUNDESTAG, AND SUFFERS FROM A LACK OF FREQUENCY ASSIGNMENTS. HE WAS QUITE CERTAIN THAT THE BUNDESTAG WOULD BE ESPECIALLY ANXIOUS FOR DLF TO USE 209 ON A FULL TIME BASIS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 120363

8. IN CONCLUSION THE GERMANS STATED THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO REACH AN AGREEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BUT THAT IT

WOULD TAKE A FEW MONTHS TO GIVE FULL CONSIDERATION TO THE VARIOUS PROPOSALS. BOTH SIDES AGREED THAT ANOTHER MEETING WAS NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE AND SUGGESTED MID-JANUARY AS A POSSIBLE TIME. THE US INVITED THE FRG SIDE TO WASHINGTON FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS BUT IT WAS AGREED THAT A DECISION ON VENUE WOULD BE TAKEN LATER.

9. A FULL MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION OF THE MEETING WILL FOLLOW." VANCE

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